A

LETTER

TO THE

UNIVERSITY of *Cambridge*,

ON

A Late RESIGNATION.

By a GENTLEMAN of *Oxford*.

Sunt verba & voces, quibus hunc lenire dolorem
Possis.

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

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TO THE

UNIVERSITY of *Cambridge*.

GENTLEMEN,

I Am a little apprehenſive, the conſolation I am about to offer you, will be thought impertinent, as being unneceſſary. For I have had the pleaſure of paſſing ſome time amongſt you, and am not ignorant, with what

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perfect tranquillity, you are able to contemplate events, which are apt to fill weak minds with awe and aſtoniſhment. Battles, Maſſacres, and Devaſtations, I have obſerved, have but juſt enough of terror in them to gain your attention, and keep your eyes open to the end of a news-paper, in which you find them related.

But then, I own, my fears upon this account, have in ſome degree abated, by reflecting that you might not perhaps be able to preſerve the ſame even temper, if, inſtead of happening in *Saxony* or

Bohemia, theſe calamities ſhould actually be brought home to your own doors. Happily for this nation, you yet have had no opportunity of ſhewing the world, how far your Philoſophy would bear you out, in ſuch extremities, and I hope never will; but you are not however without your trials. A very ſevere one has juſt now befallen you, in the reſignation of a certain Great Man; for it concerns no body ſo much as it does you, though there is not, I am perſuaded, a ſingle perſon within his Majeſty's dominions, who will not feel its effects.

Neither your love for your country, yourſelves, or the illuſtrious Stateſman, by whom you have been ſo much obliged, will ſuffer you to behold his fall with indifference. That would require a portion of the philoſophic ſpirit, little ſhort of inſenſibility itſelf, which cannot, I think, fairly be imputed to you; though during this torrent of abuſe, and popular clamour, which has run ſo high againſt his Grace, many, I confeſs, have been much ſurprized not to find one ſingle line from *Cambridge*, thrown out to his aſſiſtance, when it might have been done, with ſo much eaſe to yourſelves,

ſelves, and ſuch advantage to him. But you knew him innocent, and therefore preſumed he was ſafe; for there is nothing, you men of reaſon ſo often deceive yourſelves in, as in bringing the vulgar to your own ſtandard, and judging what effects things will have upon them, from the manner in which they appear to you. What ſome, therefore, will certainly look upon as the conſequence of your unconcern, I, who know you better, attribute wholly to your opinion of his Grace's ſafety. And this miſtake of yours, I fear, will be a conſiderable addition to your ſorrow; for no misfortunes fall ſo

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heavy as thoſe which come unexpected, and by our own fault.

In ſuch circumſtances, never will I pretend to cenſure your complaints as vain and groundleſs; but then, I muſt take the liberty to tell you, that it would be downright cruelty to yourſelves, obſtinately to ſhut your ears, againſt every topic of conſolation, without trying the force of any. This would not be acting like Philoſophers, with whom it is a maxim, as well as with the vulgar, That every thing has its bright, as well as its dark ſide, if one could but preciſely hit upon the point from which

which it ſhould be looked at. Permit me, Gentlemen, to lead you to that point. I have been in ſearch of it for ſome time, and flatter myſelf, I have at laſt been fortunate enough to find it.

Perhaps you may have ſome objections to truſting yourſelves with a ſtranger, who owns, he has no other reaſon, for offering you his aſſiſtance, than common humanity, and the reſpect he has conceived for your characters; but believe me the danger is not great, not half ſo great, as giving yourſelves up to deſpair; which ſhould never be

be followed, ſo long as there is any other guide to be had.

But before we ſet out, to deal ingenuouſly with you, there are ſome few points, not wholly immeterial to your conſolation, in which I confeſs myſelf not ſo fully inſtructed as I could wiſh. The preſent ſtate and intereſts of the nation; the manner in which they will be affected by his Grace's reſignation; and the time his ſucceſſors are likely to keep their places, are things, about which you may, probably, have ſome curioſity, and I ſhould be glad to ſatisfy it, for my own ſake as well

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as yours. But you, Gentlemen, who have long been familiar with greatneſs, muſt be ſenſible of the danger of having any thing to do with ſuch inquiries as theſe, while things are thus unſettled; nor can you be ignorant of the difficulty, as well as danger, that attends them, ſince the trade and intereſts of the nation, have lately made a part of your ſtudies.

I ſhall hope to be excuſed, therefore, if I ſhould not think fit to touch upon any of theſe points, eſpecially as they are not ſo neceſſary to my deſign as you perhaps may imagine. We academics, I

know, are apt to think, that there is a kind of inſeparable connection between the Univerſities and the State; ſo that publick affairs cannot go well, or ill, but ours muſt keep them company; but in this, I have long ſuſpected, we do but flatter ourſelves, and that the opinion has no other foundation than our own vanity. If I do not deceive myſelf in theſe ſuſpicions (and experience gives ſome countenance to them) it is far from being certain, that you ought not to rejoice in his Grace's reſignation, though the reſt of the nation may have reaſon to lament it. The boldneſs of this paradox will be apt to ſtartle

you

you at firſt ſight; but you, Gentlemen, who are always open to conviction, will reject no opinion, till you have heard what can be ſaid in its defence. Liſten then to one, who, if he ſees farther than you, it is only becauſe his paſſions are undiſturbed, becauſe he has leſs ſorrow to blind, and no prejudice to biaſs his judgment.

It is, I find, a favourite opinion with ſome of you, that the CHURCH, that *darling department* of his Grace, will ſtill be continued to him. It is but a *trifle*, they think, and though his enemies have been cruel enough to ſtrip him of every thing

elſe, ſuch a *toy* cannot be refuſed him to play with, and keep him quiet in his old age. This is a notion which, no doubt, deſerves to be cheriſhed; but having myſelf ſome little ſcruple about its truth, and not being willing to give judgment in ſo tender a point, permit me to ſhew you what advantages your Univerſity will receive from this reſignation, on both ſuppoſitions; that he is to keep, and that he is to give up, his care of the church.

If then, as is greatly to be wiſhed, the church ſhould ſtill continue under his Grace's wing, the loſs of his civil power, which has

has been thought ſo alarming, inſtead of a diſadvantage, will be of infinite ſervice to you. For though it is plain, from the *choice* he has made amongſt you, of men eminently diſtinguiſhed for their genius, abilities, deep erudition, unſpotted reputation, *ſteady principles*, and *great modeſty* *; whoſe promotion, will do him honour, ſo long as any honour ſhall be paid to the patrons of worth and letters,

* Amongſt the foremoſt of thoſe promoted by his Grace, ſtand the TWO celebrated Heroes of the *Fragment*; the author of a diſſertation on the book of *Job*, dedicated to his Grace; the Secretary for Univerſity-affairs, who has devellop'd the whole myſtery of ANGLO-SAXON policy; the author of a SERMON preached at the conſecration of the Lord Biſhop of *Cheſter*, and his ſucceſſor in the DI-

VINITY

though it is plain, I ſay, from thoſe he has not preferred, as well as thoſe he has; from thoſe he has removed from the Univerſity, and thoſe he has reſtored to it; that his Grace is bleſſed with the happieſt diſcernment in the world, of what is truly excellent, and very well diſpoſed to encourage it; yet has he often been hindered from giving a free ſweep to his inclina-

VINITY CHAIR, who has written ſo *much*, and ſo *well*, on all ſubjects, that one is really at a loſs which of his works to diſtinguiſh him by. Amongſt ſuch as his Grace has prudently overlooked are the Editor of *Demoſthenes*, the Editor of the Epiſtle to the *Piſos*, the Maker of the Church-yard Elegy, and the Author of *Elfrida*; beſides ſome others not wholly unknown to his Grace, though they have taken care not to expoſe themſelves in print.

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tions, by political regards. The ſecuring a borough, or the ſilencing ſome churliſh patriot, has ſnatched away many a delicious morſel, juſt as it was ready to drop into your mouths. And this, I make no doubt, has been the principal, if not the only cauſe, of thoſe malicious inſinuations, equally injurious to his Grace, and the gentlemen he has patronized, which have been dropped in the world by perſons of ſome diſtinction. Such is the malignant ſpirit of this worthleſs age, that men who have never been warmed by any noble or generous principles themſelves, catch at every opportunity of rendering

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their influence doubtful, and ſuſpected in others. But never were they driven to ſo wretched a ſhift as when, in deſpite of evidence, they gave it out, that the Miniſter's fondneſs for you was all pretence; that he looked upon you at the bottom as no better than a common borough, and never troubled himſelf farther in the diſpoſal of his preferments, than how to find out proper tools to manage it.

In anſwer to this inſolent ſlander, let me aſk the inventors of it (I ſay nothing of his Grace's own character, though that alone might ſecure him from ſuch reproaches) whether

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ſo many allowed ſcholars, and men of worth, would have been found in the liſt of his favourites, if learning and virtue had been no recommendation to him? Every body knows the ſort of men who are fit to be employed in borough-intrigues; let them inſtance then, if they can, any one of this ſtamp amongſt all thoſe whom he has diſtinguiſhed. And let me aſk them farther, if, at this inſtant, accounts were to be ſettled between the Univerſity and his Grace, of all that has been given, and received, (I mean it as no reflection on either of them) on which ſide would the balance be found to fall?

To expoſe ſuch men the more effectually, I am almoſt tempted to draw out the account myſelf; but his Grace will now be able to clear himſelf beyond a doubt, by continuing his favours to you, after thoſe returns have ceaſed on your part, which can now no longer be of uſe to him. The world will now ſee, whether it was intereſt or inclination which linked you together; if they are not already convinced by the applications which, for your ſake, he has ſo often withſtood, to his own diſadvantage. You yourſelves will now find, when he has no intereſt of his own to ſerve, no ſtate embarraſſments to check

him, that his affection for you will be the only motive; merit, pure and genuine merit, the only object of his bounty; which he will now be at leiſure to ſeek for, without avocation, in the groves of *Alma Mater*, where it grows in ſuch abundance.

How blind are we to our own intereſt; how apt to be deceived, when we take up our notions of things from a ſlight and ſuperficial view! What you thought would turn preferment into quite a different channel, will confine it all within the banks of *Cam*, and give a quicker motion to its lazy

current. What pity, ſo fair and beautiful a building, as I have here been raiſing, ſhould reſt on ſo tottering a foundation! It grieves me to think, that a moment may deſtroy it; but ſtill it will be prudent to provide for the worſt that can happen, and nothing elſe ſhould force me to make the following ſuppoſition. What if his Grace, after he has been driven from the Cabinet, ſhould not be allowed to retreat to the Sanctuary! How would you bear ſo fatal an accident? With your uſual calmneſs? It need not deſert you; for even here a good eye may diſcover ſomething more

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than a few faint glimmerings of comfort.

Never was there ſo fair a field for patience and gratitude to ſignalize themſelves in, on your part; for fortitude and reſignation, on the part of your illuſtrious Benefactor. *You* might convince an *unbelieving* world, that you know how to ſet bounds to your deſires after power and preferment; *he*, ſtill higher in virtue as in dignity, that he could part with *all* he has ſo long, and ſo deſervedly poſſeſſed. Tired with the buſtle and factions of a court, he may betake himſelf to your peaceful retreats, and, after

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ſurpaſſing *Solon* in the State, may rival *Plato* in the Academy, by compleating that admirable *ſyſtem of laws* which, when he entered upon his office, was ſo wiſely planned; and part of which, having then been enacted in the faireſt, and freeſt manner, and ſince executed with the greateſt exactneſs, have been found to reſtore health and vigour to every member of your languiſhing body. And can any thing be more glorious than ſuch a change as this, from the dregs of *Romulus*, to the pure refined ſpirits of your republick? How will he lament, that he did not ſooner fly from the noiſe and flat-

flattery of courts, to live with you in thoſe delightful manſions, where peace, and harmony, and love, have choſen their perpetual reſidence? Here, without interruption, he may now enjoy that ſweet ſociety, of which, at ſhort and ſtolen intervals, he has hitherto only had a taſte. Receive then your much-loved Chancellor, now WHOLLY yours, with open arms and joyful acclamations; as on *that day* (which I, a wondering witneſs of its celebrity, well remember) when *Maſon's Muſe* and all your academic choir, uſhered him *triumphant* to your Senate; and when you have gazed long enough upon him, now

made

made greater by his *fall*, if long enough can be, turn your eyes and thoughts upon yourſelves. There no longer will you behold marks of jealouſy and ſuſpicion in the faces of thoſe who ſtand neareſt to his perſon, and foremoſt in his favour; and but few, very few, of envy and chagrin in ſuch, whoſe ill fortune has caſt them at a diſtance from his ſmiles, and beyond the reach of his *ſoft* and ſoothing ſpeeches.

No more will mutual recriminations be heard amongſt you: attempts to reſtore diſcipline, no longer will be blackened with the odious name of calumny on your paſt

paſt and preſent manners; nor will freedom of debate then be reckoned oppoſition to his Grace. Whatever he ſhall propoſe, after it has been maturely weighed, and candidly approved, will paſs into a law; without your either being *bluſtered* into compliance by an imperious prebendary, or *coaxed and wheedled* into it by a *ſoft* and gracious Prelate.

Indecent and unconſtitutional *aſſociations* will never again be entered into, in oppoſition to authority, and to the utter ſubverſion of diſcipline and diſtinction, under the ſtale and frivolous pretence of your liberty and property's being in danger.

You, who have been provided for by his Grace, may, if you pleaſe, become your *own maſters*, and ſit down with what you have got, in your prebendal, decanal, or epiſcopal houſes; or if you ſhould not find them quite ſo convenient as you could wiſh, there will be no great difficulty in changing them for better; for as the new miniſter will hardly have the goodneſs to ſtoop ſo *low* as his Grace for the objects of his favour, You, who have already emerged into *broad day-light*, will preſently be obſerved by him; and having once met his eye, you will be ſure to fix it.

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As to THOSE, who have long been ſtarving on expectations, they will find themſelves at liberty to ſit down to their college commons, or may ſtart afreſh on new purſuits, as their appetite or ambition ſhall happen to be uppermoſt.

And THEY who hoped to be preferred purely for their *merit*, without parting with their *freedom*, for the future will have learned more wit, than to dream of uniting two ſuch inconſiſtent things, as INDEPENDENCE and COURT-FAVOUR. In one word, lamentable as your caſe may have appeared to be, every one will find ſome cordial

dial drop to comfort him. Some will perceive, that they have reaſon to rejoice his Grace was *ever* in power at all; ſome, that he kept in preciſely long enough to do *their buſineſs*; others, that he is gone at *laſt*; ſo that, notwithſtanding the alluring temptations of green moats, and ſpreading boughs, I hope to hear of very few irregular exits among you during the preſent gloomy ſeaſon.

I am,

OXFORD, *Nov.* 15, 1756. *Gentlemen, &c.*

FINIS.

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